

## THE 2020 D.C. RISING STARS

WE ARE PLEASED TO PRESENT OUR 2020 D.C. RISING STARS. SELECTED FROM A COMPETITIVE POOL, OUR 40 HONOREES REPRESENT A CROSS-SECTION OF PRACTICE AREAS.



### **JOSHUA JOHNSON, 35**

**EMPLOYER: VINSON & ELKINS**

**TITLE AND PRACTICE AREA:  
COUNSEL, APPELLATE**

■ **DESCRIBE YOUR BIGGEST WIN OR ACCOMPLISHMENT IN PRACTICE.**

My biggest win was securing summary judgment for the State Bar of Texas this May against claims that the mandatory bar violates the First Amendment. My biggest accomplishment was presenting my first U.S. Supreme Court argument in December 2019 in a dispute over the copyrightability of certain state-government publications.

■ **WHAT WAS THE MOST VALUABLE LESSON YOU LEARNED IN YOUR FIRST YEAR PRACTICING LAW?**

There are no “drafts.” Anything you write for colleagues’ or supervisors’ review should be as close to a final product as you can make it. I quickly learned this lesson in a fast-paced district court clerkship. District court judges need high-quality work product from their clerks to manage their caseloads.

■ **WHO IS YOUR GREATEST LAWYER MENTOR AND WHAT HAS HE OR SHE TAUGHT YOU?**

I was fortunate to clerk for three amazing judges and mentors: Judges Nancy Gertner and David S. Tatel and Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Their fluidity in writing, precision in research, and commitment to basic principles of equity and justice are models for my professional work.

■ **PLEASE SHARE A BRIEF KEY TO YOUR SUCCESS.** I have worked on an array of cases, from criminal law to copyright to environmental disputes to antitrust, and much in between. That range of perspectives helps me carry insights from one area of law into others and frame issues to appeal to generalist judges.